

XXIX. *Notes of a Second Visit to Madagascar.*

By EDWARD NEWTON, M.A., C.M.Z.S.

I HAVE much pleasure in being able to forward the bird-notes of a second visit to Madagascar. I left Mauritius on the 30th August, 1862, on board of H.M.S.S. 'Gorgon;' but light winds prevented our reaching Tamatave before the 5th September. For the first week we remained at Tamatave or in its neighbourhood, chiefly at Soamandrikazay, on the Hivondrona river, and about four miles from its mouth, where we were most hospitably entertained by Mr. Ferdinand Fiche. I say "we," for the party consisted of Mr. G. E. Maule, Lieut. R.A., who had come down in the 'Gorgon,' and Mr. J. Magee, a gentleman who for three months had been collecting the rare and splendid orchids of the country. We then proceeded to Foule Point and Fenerive by easy stages, arriving at the latter on the 16th September. There is but little variety in the country between Tamatave and Fenerive; the route lies close along the coast, for a great part of the way on the beach, the men and ourselves often walking in the surf for the sake of the firmer tread the wet sand afforded us. When the path leaves the shore, it passes through thick scrubby bush, which, shutting out the wind, but allowing the sun at mid-day to come streaming down, makes walking in the deep sand weary work,—or over large plains of grass, closely eaten down by the large herds of cattle. Several rivers have to be crossed; and as there is generally only one small canoe for the passage, and that often on the wrong side of the river, with the ferryman absent, much time is lost in getting men and baggage over, the former being nearly always too much afraid of the "*Voay*" (Crocodiles) to swim across*. About five miles from Fenerive the country becomes slightly undulating, and apparently continues so for some miles to the northward. We left Fenerive on the 19th, and reached Soamandrikazay again on the 21st. Thence we proceeded up the right fork of the river called Fangandrafra in canoes for about fifteen

* At one narrow, clear stream, however, just before reaching Foule Point, there was a very decent bridge; and below it we found the scarce Lattice-leaved plant (*Ouvirandra fenestralis*) growing plentifully.

miles, in the hopes of finding a certain patch of forest which we were led to believe abounded with all living creatures that delight the eyes of a naturalist. The river winds between small hills, increasing in size as we get further to the south-west. Not long since they have been all clothed with forest, but the trees have been cut down and burnt for the sake of planting rice; not that the increased consumption of that article has been the motive, but the natives find that, after three or four crops on the same ground, the yield diminishes, and so the forest is sacrificed to obtain fresh ground. At the present time the country is covered with tall, rank grass, eight or ten feet high, and a species of *Hedychium*, through which it is exceedingly hard work to force a passage. Occasionally a small patch of forest has been left standing, but to no great extent—probably some spot which superstition forbids the natives to disturb. Small villages perched on the tops of hills occur every mile or so; and the people appear very glad to see us, bringing us presents of fowls and rice, but not able to understand our object in coming up their river. A good few canoes laden with rice meet us, and occasionally we overtake one laden with that curse of the country, rum. For two days we paddled on, the stream getting stronger and narrower; the second day we passed about eight rapids, at each of which nearly all hands had to get out and drag the canoes up, making our progress very slow. At last, just as it was getting dark on the second day, we came to a much larger rapid, which would have taken some hours to ascend; and so here we resolved to stop, having got very little for our pains. The next morning, being unable to find any forest worth mentioning, and not having a sufficient number of men to make a journey on foot, we were compelled to paddle back to Soamandrikazay, an operation our men found much easier than going up the stream. Notwithstanding this, they managed to capsize us in descending a rapid, and washed everything but guns, powder-horns, and shot-pouches out of the canoes.

A few days after, Mr. Magee and I went up the left fork, or rather the main river, Hivondrona; and having proceeded to the small village of Ampasimaventy (which was as far as we could by canoe), we walked on, for about three hours, to a place

called Chasmanna, where there were three or four tumble-down houses on the verge of a forest.

The country through which we had passed was much the same as that through which the right fork flows, the hills only being on a larger scale. The channel of the river just above Ampasimaventy becomes wider and more rocky; occasionally its width is from one to two hundred yards, through which the stream runs in separate courses, as it is the dry season, making several very pretty waterfalls. In the rainy season, when the whole bed of the river is full, forming one grand torrent of foam, it must be magnificent. It struck me as singular what can become of the mass of water which even in the dry season flows down. I presume it must be absorbed or evaporated in the vast marshes and lakes on the immediate line of the coast; for the width of the river at its mouth is certainly not half as great as at Ampasimaventy, perhaps twenty miles off, and not much deeper. At Chasmanna I was sorry to see the destruction of the forest still going on. Several large tracts were being cut down, and the fine timber was burnt as it lay on the ground, though there were thousands upon thousands of acres of ground apparently available and already cleared. We remained here three nights, when we were obliged to return to Tamatave, the arrival from Antananarivo of the Mauritian embassy being every day expected; and eventually I returned to Mauritius on the 12th October. During this trip I was able to ascertain the native names of most of the birds I observed. Each species nearly always has a separate one, and sometimes even more than one (for instance, *Ardea bubulcus*, the most conspicuous and characteristic bird of the east coast of Madagascar, has three), and I met with very few people who could not give at once the name of any species shown to them. The Marmites, who chiefly obtain their livelihood by carrying persons or goods from place to place, and consequently travel over various parts of the island, are generally acquainted with every synonym a bird may have; and I am led to believe that there are but few species which are known by the residents in the different districts by the same name. To Mr. Fiche I am indebted for the orthography of most of the local names.

I am able to add to my list a few other species, and additional information, through the kindness of Capt. Anson, R.A., who was one of the coronation mission to the capital, and of Mr. Caldwell, who went up in charge of the presents to His Majesty King Radama.

[*Obs.* The names of the species made known as inhabitants of the island since the publication of Dr. Hartlaub's '*Ornithologischer Beitrag zur Fauna Madagascar*' are given in small capitals; those included by him, in italics.]

1. *TINNUNCULUS NEWTONI*, Gurney, '*Ibis*,' 1863, p. 36, pl. 2.

"Hitsikitsikia" (so called, I believe, from its habit of treading the air; in fact, "wind-hovering").

I obtained several skins of this little Kestrel. It is very common on the coast, particularly a few miles to the northward of Tamatave. Probably in this part of the country they always breed in the hole of a decayed tree, or on the large tufts of ferns or orchids which grow luxuriantly on the tall trees, and even on the brushwood.

At Fenerive, on the 17th September, Mr. Maule discovered a nest with five eggs, situated on a parasite growing on a tree, and shot the female bird. To Mr. Caldwell also I am indebted for several eggs which were brought to him when staying at Antananarivo, and which were found in the sides of the deep trenches cut by the Hovas for the purpose of conducting water from the tops of the hills to the rice-grounds below, and which, from constant use, are now worn many feet deep. The eggs resemble those of the genus generally in all their varieties, and are in long diameter 1.4 inch, transverse diam. 1.26 inch.

Iris hazel, beak bluish horn-colour; cere, skin round the eye, and legs *orange*-yellow in the males: in the females the latter parts are *greenish* yellow.

2. *Milvus parasiticus*, Daudin.

"Papango."

Common everywhere. One killed at Fenerive, on the 17th September, had the iris yellow, beak and cere yellowish white, feet bright yellow, claws black.

3. *MILVUS ATER* (Gmelin).

I shot a bird of this species (which, as far as I know, has not hitherto been noticed in Madagascar) on the Hivondrona, on the 8th of September.

4. *Nisus madagascariensis*, Verreaux.

"Parrafody" (which being translated means, I believe, that which eats the "Fody," or *Foudia madagascariensis*; so, literally, it is the "Fody Hawk").

Between Foule Point and Tamatave, on the 20th, I saw a Sparrow-hawk, but unfortunately I had not a gun at hand. On the 1st of October, between Ampasimaventy and Chasmanna, on the river Hivondrona, I killed a male. Iris, cere, and orbits yellow; beak horn-colour; legs yellow.

5. *CIRCUS MACROSCELES*, A. Newton, Proc. Zool. Soc., May 12, 1863*.

"Fandrantsadambo" (meaning, that which tears its food as a pig does).

On the 22nd of September we were quietly paddling through a clump of tall bulrushes, where we had marked down a small flock of the little White-breasted Duck (*Nettapus auritus*), when I saw a Harrier hover for an instant just above the rushes, and plunge down into them. Immediately there was a loud outcry from some water-fowl, probably a *Porphyrio*, one species of which I had before killed in this same clump of rushes. We pushed on to the spot with some difficulty, as the canoe's head was in another direction, and it was no easy matter turning it among the rushes. The Marmites would not keep quiet, but were constantly talking; and as we were not nearly within shot, I was in considerable excitement for fear the Harrier should fly away before we got up. However, when we were about thirty-five yards off, he rose,

* We subjoin Mr. A. Newton's description of this new bird:—

"*CIRCUS MACROSCELES*, sp. nov.

"*C. aspectu Circo cyaneo generaliter similis, sed statura valde major.*

"*Descr. maris hornotini.*—Coloribus omnino ut in exemplis *Circi cyanei* ejusdem ætatis, sed striis scapinis ventris longioribus, caudæ tegminum latoribus, et rectricum transversalibus angustioribus clarioribusque. Long. tot. 22·75; alæ plus quam 15; caudæ 10; tarsi 4; dig. med. c. ung. 2·75; rostr. culm. 2," poll. et dec. Angl.—ED.

and I killed him. On picking him up, I found he had been robbing some water-fowl's nest, his mouth and crop containing three young birds, evidently taken from the egg-shell, with fragments of the latter, coloured pinkish white, with red spots, like that of a Water-rail or *Porphyrio*. We looked for the nest in vain, and I presume the canoe must have passed right over it and swamped it.

On skinning the bird, I found it was a male, though in the brown-streaked plumage, and therefore probably a young bird. The Marmites knew the bird at once, and pronounced it to be much more destructive to chickens than the "Papango"*; it cannot, however, be very common, as this is only the second example of the genus I have ever met with in Madagascar. Iris yellow, tip of beak black, base horn-colour, cere yellow, claws black.

6. *Polyboroides madagascariensis* (Daudin).

"Feheark."

I saw this species on two occasions about ten miles up the Hivondrona, and also at Foule Point, where I observed, in a freshly skinned specimen, that the legs bend back in the same manner as described by Mr. Ayres (*Ibis*, 1859, p. 237) when writing of its congener, *P. typicus*.

7. ? *Otus madagascariensis*, A. Smith.

Captain Anson, when close to Tamatave on his return from Antananarivo, wounded a brown Owl, which he brought on board the 'Gorgon' alive; but it died the first night, and the Malagasy servants, from their stupid superstition, threw it overboard. It appeared to me to be identical with the specimen obtained by Dr. Meller†, which was sent to England some months after his return from the capital. At Ampasimaventy I heard, at night, the cry of a bird, which I was told was a species of "Vorondolo," but brown, and with a head like that of an Ox! Captain Anson's bird had no appearance of tufts; it was, however, hardly old enough to have shown them distinctly.

* It is, perhaps, worth while mentioning, that a specimen of a Harrier in the museum here, and which is said to have come from Réunion, is labelled "Papango."

† This was *Otus madagascariensis*; see P. Z. S. 1863, p. 160, where a list of Dr. Meller's collection is given.—ED.

8. *Strix flammea*, Linnæus.

“Vorondolo.”

By no means uncommon in the neighbourhood of Soamandrıkazy. At dusk one was generally to be seen flying round the buildings of the cane-mill, or to be heard snoring, if it was too dark to see it. One moonlight night I saw three, but I was never fortunate enough to shoot one there. However, one very hot afternoon, the 24th of September, we were proceeding up a narrow tributary of the Hivondrona, when one of our men cried out “Vorondolo!” and, to our astonishment, we saw a White Owl sitting in the full glare of the sun on a branch of a species of *Acacia*, then totally devoid of leaves, and Mr. Maule shot it. It had the iris black, beak whitish, legs brown. I cannot detect any difference between this bird and those brought from Antananarivo by Mr. Caldwell, to whom I am indebted for the following interesting account of this bird at the capital, where it appears much commoner than I was last year inclined to believe (Ibis, 1862, p. 269). Mr. Caldwell had ample opportunities of observing it, having remained there upwards of two months. He writes as follows:—“The Owl’s eggs (five in number) were brought to my house at Antananarivo for sale, in consequence of my having promised a reward for them. I then offered the man another dollar on condition of his bringing me in person to the nest he found, that I might see it with my own eyes. In a couple of days he returned, took me to the rock over which the Christians were formerly thrown, and led me along a ledge, when I was obliged to take off my shoes and stockings for fear of slipping. The face of the rock, when not precipitous, is covered with the prickly pear and scanty coarse grass. It was on this ledge that I got the second nest. The bird was sitting when I came up, and there were four eggs. The nest was *on the rock*, under a prickly pear; and the eggs barely separated from the rock by a little of the coarse grass which grew there. In fact, there appeared to be no attempt made to take any trouble in forming it. It was not in the dark, the opening or passage looking to the north-west, and the whole rather exposed than otherwise to the hot sun, which was powerful enough to make it very unpleasant to walk bare-footed over the granite

rock. As I was remounting the ledge to get to the narrow path I had come by (for I had gone down the slope about fifteen feet to get to the nest), I saw another Owl sitting on a nest exactly similar, and as the bird flew away knocked her down with a stick, and took the eggs also, four in number. It was about half-past three in the afternoon. I also disturbed several others, but could not get at their nests. * * * The Owls appear to roost all over the face of the precipice, at least a mile in length, on the western side of the capital, and go out at nightfall, cruising about the rock and over the town for a quarter of an hour. After that time they always flew straight away to the low country and rice-grounds to the west." The eggs measure from 1·82 inch to 1·78 inch in length, by 1·31 inch and 1·3 inch in breadth, and are, of course, white.

9. *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*, Sganzin.

"Tar-târo."

Common on the coast. Mr. Maule killed one on a narrow spit of sand close to the mouth of the Hivondrona river, where there was not a blade of grass or covert of any sort within a hundred yards. At Fenerive, on the 18th of September, I shot a Night-jar off her eggs, which are in long diameter 1·08 inch, transverse diameter ·82 inch, and of the same character as those of *C. europæus*, but rather darker in colour. The situation where I found them, too, was such as would be chosen by the latter bird.

10. *Cypselus ambrosiacus* (Gmelin).

Nearly everywhere on the coast I found this species tolerably common; the specimen preserved was killed at Soamandrikazay, on the 23rd of September.

11. *Phedina* — ? sp. indet.

I saw examples of this genus at the village of Hivondrona, and again higher up near Ampasimaventy, but on neither occasion did they appear to me to be *Phedina borbonica* *.

* I may here mention, with reference to my remark (Ibis, 1862, p. 270, note), that the hurricane of 1861 has not entirely exterminated this species

12. *Eurystomus madagascariensis* (Linnæus).

"Voronkark."

I saw one example at Chasmanna. Though we passed over the same route as Dr. Roch did last year, between Tamatave and Foule Point, and where he found this species so plentiful, we did not observe it. We were very nearly two months earlier; and perhaps the bird in those parts is migratory.

13. *Brachypteracias leptosomus* (Lesson).

A specimen was obtained by Captain Anson near Ampasimbé on his return from Antananarivo.

14. *Atelornis pittoides*, Lafresnaye.

Obtained by Captain Anson and Mr. Caldwell in the forest of Alanamasaoatra—the only locality in which I have yet heard of it.

15. *Corythornis vintsioides*, Lafresnaye.

"Vinshi."

As common as it was last year.

16. *Merops superciliosus*, Linnæus.

"Kirio kirio" (so called from its cry).

To be seen hawking about the Hivondrona river almost daily. On the Fangandrafra, a tributary of the Hivondrona, I dug out a female Bee-eater from a hole in the bank of the river, about three feet in length; the nest was not yet made, and the bird's beak was covered with soil, showing that she was still working at the excavation. All the specimens, of both sexes, that we obtained were bare of feathers on their breasts and thighs, as if incubating. That they had not all done so, was evident from the nest of the one I have mentioned not being finished; yet it and its mate were both as naked as the others. Is this a peculiarity of the genus? In both sexes, iris red, beak black, legs brown.

in Mauritius, but it is certainly much rarer; for at the locality in the district of Savanne where I have observed it to be most plentiful I remained for ten days, in June 1862, and never observed more than three at once, and as they were always at the same place, they might have been the same individuals.

17. *HYPHERPES CORALLIROSTRIS*, A. Newton, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1863, p. 85, pl. 13*.

"Sakôdy."

At Chasmanna, on the 2nd of October, I killed this pretty little Creeper as it was climbing up a dead tree: it was the only one observed, but the natives said it was not uncommon. Iris very dark red, beak vermilion, legs lead-colour. Male.

18. *Nectarinia angladiana*, Shaw.

"Shoie."

Observed all along the coast, but at Fenerive only it appeared tolerably common.

19. *Nectarinia souimanga* (Gmelin).

Common everywhere. On the 1st of October, paddling up the Hivondrona, I found a nest of this bird, containing two eggs, on the bank, almost overhanging the water; it was a domed one †, and was very prettily placed in some tall grass, the blue flower of a *Lobelia bicolor* almost closing the entrance. It is composed outwardly of broad leaves of grass, decayed, and a little moss; over the entrance it has a sort of projecting pouch of a finer grass, and inside it is lined with down of some plant. The eggs, which were hard-set, are greyish white, thickly freckled with light

* We subjoin Mr. A. Newton's description of this entirely new form of bird:—

"*HYPHERPES*, genus novum *Certhianum* vel *Sittinum*.

"*Char. Gen.*—Rostrum breve, robustum, leviter emarginatum, ad apicem aliquanto compressum, rictu setoso. Alæ mediocres, rotundatæ, ad caudam mediam attingentes, remige quarto, quinto et sexto æqualibus; tertio septimum, et octavo secundum, superantibus; primo multo brevior; cauda mediocris, prope æqualis, rectricibus duodecim aliquanto rigentibus. Pedes validissimi, tarsis quam digiti medii posticique longioribus, unguibus compressis, subvalidis.

"*HYPHERPES CORALLIROSTRIS*, sp. nov.

"Capite, gutture, pectore et abdomine schistaceo-brunneis, olivaceo indutis; collo, dorso, alis caudaque supra fusco-cæruleis, virente tinctis; remigibus fuscis, extus pallide marginatis, intus cervino latius limbatis, ut in *Tichodroma*; uropygio et crisso subrufescentibus; rectricibus obsolete fasciatis; rostro toto coccineo; pedibus plumbeis; iridibus obscure rubris. Long. tot. 4·8; rostr. a fr. ·4, a rict. ·65; al. 2·9; caud. 2·2; tars. ·9; dig. med. c. ung. ·8, post. ·97."—ED.

† I mentioned (*Ibis*, 1862, p. 272) that last year I observed an open nest of this species; as it was only building, I presume the birds had not put the roof on when I saw it.

hair-brown, so as to show but little of the ground-colour. They are .59 inch in length by .44 inch in breadth.

20. *Drymæca madagascariensis*, Hartlaub.

“Teng-teng.”

By far the commonest Warbler on the coast.

21. *Bernieria madagascariensis* (Gmelin).

“Tra-trak.”

On the 3rd of October, at Chasmanna, I shot a female of this species in the forest. It was hopping about in a thicket, and I had but little time to watch its habits or movements; its stomach was filled with the remains of spiders. Iris light brown, upper mandible dark brown, lower horn-colour, legs and claws brown, soles yellowish.

22. *Bernieria minor*, Bonaparte.

“Tra-trak.”

Not two hundred yards from where I killed the last-mentioned, I shot an example of this species, a female also. My people could not detect the difference, and called them by the same name. This bird also was among some thick bushes.

Iris light brown, upper mandible dark brown, lower yellowish, legs greyish yellow, claws flesh-colour: stomach filled with remains of beetles.

23. *Ellisia typica*, Hartlaub.

“Parety.”

On the 18th of September I was in a small scrubby patch of forest, when, from a thicket by the side of the path, the Marmite who was with me picked up a nest containing three eggs; they were a puzzle to me. In appearance the latter were Bunting's; and when I saw the situation of the nest, it was exactly such as would have been chosen by *Emberiza citrinella*. We replaced the nest as carefully as possible and retired some few yards. After waiting a few minutes and not seeing the bird, I went up to the nest, and found her on. I wanted to get her to cross the path, so as to give me the chance of a shot; but she dived into the thicket a few feet from where I was, and disappeared. I retired, and soon made her out, creeping among the

branches, jerking her tail and uttering a low harsh note, something like a watchman's rattle. I was too close to shoot; but it was no use increasing the distance, as then I lost sight of her altogether. So I drew both powder and shot, reloaded with only half a charge of each, and fired through the thick bush. On going to the spot, to my disgust, I found I had missed; and as the morning was damp, and my powder none of the best, the smoke hung heavily for some minutes close round, making me afraid it would drive the bird away. Just then a very heavy shower came on, wetting me through; but the bird reappearing in the bushes, I shot again and again, to no purpose. Two minutes after, the man who was with me made a grab at the nest, and, to my astonishment, I found he had caught the bird in his hands.

It was a female. Iris hazel, upper mandible dark brown, lower yellowish, legs lead-colour.

The eggs, in long diameter .86 inch, and transverse diameter .59 inch, are of a pale madder-pink, blotched and streaked in Bunting-like lines with darker shades of the same colour, so as to be not at all unlike some eggs of *Anthus arboreus*.

The nest is composed outwardly of dead leaves of coarse grass, and inwardly of fine flower-stalks of some plant.

24. CALAMOHERPE NEWTONI, Hartlaub, Proc. Zool. Soc., May 12, 1863*.

“Vorombendrana.”

This species is not at all uncommon on the river and lakes where bulrushes grow, near Soamandrikazay. The male is often seen perched on the top of a tall rush or projecting twig on the bank, singing nearly as sweetly as a European Nightingale.

On the 9th of September we found the nest of this bird, con-

* We subjoin Dr. Hartlaub's description of this new species:—

“CALAMOHERPE NEWTONI, nob.

“♂. Supra obscurius olivascens, subunicolor, subtus multo pallidior, medio subflavicans; mento gulaque albidis; jugulo maculis longitudinalibus fuscis conspicue notato; subalaribus flavo-albidis; subcaudalibus obscuris; maxilla fusca, mandibula obscure aurantiaco-rubente, ore interno læte aurantiaco; iride helvola. Long. $6\frac{1}{3}$ ”; rostr. a fr. $6\frac{1}{4}$ ”; rostr. a rict. 9”; al. 2” 7”; caud. 3”; tars. 11”.

“Ala brevis. Cauda longa, rotundata, rectricibus angustatis, apice rotundato-attenuatis.”—ED.

taining three eggs, supported between three or four bulrushes; and though at the time the water was low, the base of the nest actually touched it. It is very neatly made, and in shape much resembles that of *Salicaria arundinacea*; it is composed of decayed stems and leaves of grass and one or two feathers; inside it is lined with fine bents and feathers. The eggs measure $\cdot 77$ inch in long diameter by $\cdot 57$ inch in transverse diameter; they are pale greyish white, thickly spotted and blotched with pale lilac, brownish orange, and hair-brown. Iris hazel, upper mandible dark brown, lower mandible dusky orange, inside of the mouth and tongue bright orange, legs brownish lead-colour.

25. *Pratincola sibylla* (Linnæus).

“Fetah.”

Is very common on the open country in the neighbourhood of Foule Point. Its song resembles that of the European species. On the 19th of September, between Fenerive and Foule Point, I found a nest of this species, containing three eggs, in a tuft of coarse grass. The eggs are of a pale greenish blue, thinly freckled and streaked with light rust-colour, very like some examples of *P. rubicola*. Long diam. $\cdot 78$ inch, transverse diam. $\cdot 58$. Iris dark brown, beak and legs black.

26. *Gervaisia albospecularis* (Eydoux & Gervais).

“Todeah.”

I am indebted to Mr. Caldwell for a skin of this species (the first I had seen), obtained at Betanaombé, near Tamatave, July the 8th, 1862. I observed it, on our way from Foule Point, in the scrub by the sea-side; but on the coast I do not think it is very common. Some fifteen or twenty miles up the Hivondrona we found it in considerable numbers. In its habits it resembles a Redstart, perhaps, more than a Stonechat; the male, perched on a tall branch, sings a loud but monotonous song, every now and then descending to pick up some small insect from the ground and returning to its post, while his mate seeks the shelter of the bushes and does not readily show herself. At Chasmanna, on the 2nd of October, I found a nest of this species in the stump of an old tree which had been cut off roughly some six feet from the ground; it was placed in an indentation about halfway up, quite

exposed ; in fact, in the same sort of situation as I have often seen chosen by the Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa grisola*).

Having stated that I wished to have the bird, the chief of the village, who was with me, picked up the tendril of some plant, and in a minute had affixed a capital snare over the nest. The sun was then hot ; and as it had been raining before, it was probable the bird would be some time before she returned to the nest, so I went home to breakfast. Shortly after, the bird was brought to me by the chief's little girl, who had been sent to fetch it, alive and with the snare round one foot. Unfortunately, as is frequently the habit of the Malagasy, the wretch of a child had pulled out all the quill-feathers of the tail and wings, destroying the bird as a specimen.

The nest was large, in appearance very like a Stonechat's, composed of grass, moss, and the down of some plant, and lined with finer material of the same nature. The eggs are of a very pale bluish green, thickly blotched or mottled with lilac and hair-brown, the patches of the latter colour prevailing. Long diam. .87 inch, transv. diam. .63 inch. Iris brown, beak black, legs dusky grey, soles yellowish.

27. *Motacilla flaviventris*, J. Verreaux.

By no means common ; but a pair were here and there to be seen distributed over the part of the country I visited. I never succeeded in obtaining a nest ; but from what I saw of them on several occasions, I have no doubt it was not far from the season of incubation with them.

In habits they resemble the European Pied Wagtail more than either the Yellow or Grey, and are not always by the water. Iris dark brown, beak black, legs lead-colour.

28. *Zosterops madagascariensis* (Linnæus).

“Ramanjerek.”

I believe this species is the one usually seen in the forests ; but specimens are exceedingly difficult to shoot, and often only to be seen by gazing up to the tops of the highest trees, amongst the boughs of which they are constantly hopping and climbing, and never for a moment at rest. On the 3rd of October I obtained

a pair at Ampasimaventy. Iris dark brown ; beak lead-colour, darker at tip ; legs lead-colour.

29. *Hypsipetes ourovang* (Gmelin).

“ Horaovana ” (pronounced “ Wroova ”).

Certainly the commonest bird I met with. On the 4th of October, at Ampasimaventy, a man brought me a live Thrush, the lining of a nest, and two eggs, on which he said he caught the bird. It proved to be a female, and had the breast bare of feathers. The nest appears to have been outwardly composed of coarse grass, roots, and moss ; it was lined with the fine flower-stems of some unbelliferous plant.

The eggs are creamy white, blotched and spotted thinly with lead-grey, and more thickly with deep pinkish brown—the latter markings being chiefly disposed at the larger end, or distributed zonewise. Long diam. .93 inch, transv. diam. .74 inch. Iris bright red, beak orange, legs dusky yellow.

30. *ERYTHROSTERNA* (?) *BRUNNEICAUDA*, A. Newton, Proc. Zool. Soc., May 12, 1863*.

Near Fenerive I obtained two examples of this species, both females, on the 16th and 18th of October respectively. Iris light yellow, beak black, legs lead-colour.

31. *Tchitrea pretiosa*, Lesson.

“ Sket-vololo.”

I once or twice saw this bird (and, from his description, I believe Dr. Roch saw it last year at Ranomafana), but I did not get a shot at one until I was at Chasmanna. They generally keep in thick bushes or dark forests, and, notwithstanding their conspicuous plumage, are not often seen. I saw one rufous-coloured example of a “ Sket ” on the coast and at Chasmanna,

* We also subjoin Mr. A. Newton's description of this apparently new bird :—

“ *ERYTHROSTERNA* (?) *BRUNNEICAUDA*, sp. nov.

“ *E. ad Erythrosterenam parvam* multo appropinquans, sed cauda unicolore.

“ *Descr. feminae junioris* (?).—Supra olivaceo-murina, remigibus externe pallidius limbatis, subtus rufescenti-albida ; rostro nigricante, pedibus schistaceis, iridibus pallide flavis. Long. tot. 4.62 ; alæ 2 ; caudæ 1.45 ; tarsi .71 ; dig. med. c. ung. .48 ; rostr. .38.”—ED.

but did not obtain it. Dr. Meller had a specimen in that plumage. Iris dark brown ; skin round eye light blue ; interior of mouth bright yellow ; lower mandible bluish, upper black ; legs lead-colour.

32. *Ceblepyris cana* (Lichtenstein).

"Angave."

I shot a male near Chasmanna on the 1st of October ; it appeared not to differ in plumage from the females obtained last year.

33. *Artamia leucocephala* (Linnæus).

A pair of these birds were obtained by Mr. Caldwell in the forest of Alanamasaoatra.

34. *Leptopterus viridis* (Gmelin).

"Voron-va-sat-sat."

Plentifully distributed all over the country I visited. It appears to live chiefly on caterpillars from the leaves of trees. In its flight it makes tremendous dips. I never heard it utter a note. There is scarcely any difference in plumage between the sexes.

35. *Dicrurus forficatus* (Linnæus).

"Drongo."

After the Thrush, this I consider to be the commonest bird. In its habits it is a true Shrike. I obtained several nests ; the most favourite position is a bough overhanging a river. Three appears to be the normal number of eggs laid. A nest I have by me is composed of roots and the tendrils of some plant, and is woven neatly to the fork of a bough by spiders' webs. The eggs are of a pale salmon-colour, with light lilac blotches and reddish-brown spots, the latter markings blurred. Long diam. 1.1 inch, transv. diam. .74 inch.

36. *Vanga curvirostris* (Gmelin).

"Voron-bang," "Vanga."

Nowhere common, and, from its retiring habits, much oftener heard than seen. It appears generally to hide amongst the leaves of trees. One that I killed on the 16th of September had its stomach filled with large grasshoppers. Its note is most

peculiar—a single one very high-pitched, and ringing like a blow struck by a heavy hammer on an anvil; this is repeated at short intervals, and may be heard from a distance of half a mile.

37. *Corvus madagascariensis*, Bonaparte.

“Quork.”

Common generally; but at Fenerive it did not appear to be so plentiful as elsewhere. They are in general very tame. The eggs are in character truly typical of the genus. Long diam. 1·64 inch, transv. diam. 1·23 inch.

38. *Hartlaubia madagascariensis* (Linnæus).

“Vorontaynombi” (literally, “Cattle-Dung Bird,” from its habit of turning over cattle-dung in search of insects).

Met with in tolerable numbers. In the afternoon from ten to twenty often assemble on some tall tree to catch the last rays of the sun, as Starlings are wont to do in England. On the 20th of September I observed two females carrying materials for their nests.

39. *ACRIDOTHERES TRISTIS* (Linnæus).

At Fenerive on the 17th of September, and near Foule Point on the 20th, I saw a pair of these birds. Last year, when near Foule Point, Dr. Roch believed he saw a species of this genus, larger than the Mauritian bird; but I have very little doubt that they are identical, having at Fenerive a very good opportunity of watching a pair feeding amongst a herd of cattle.

I do not think the species has been introduced into Madagascar itself; but I think it is possible they may into the French colony of St. Mary's close by, and from thence made their way across to the main island.

40. *Nelicurvius pensilis* (Gmelin).

Two specimens of this bird, most grievously shot about, were brought to me at Fenerive.

41. *Ploceus* — ? sp. indet.

One of my companions found in the forest at Fenerive two nests (one of which he brought in, containing young but a few days old) which probably belonged to some species of *Ploceus*. It might, however, possibly have been that of the last-mentioned

bird, though the natives declared that it was not. The nest is composed of the strips of leaves of, I think, a species of palm-tree, each strip being from an eighth to a quarter of an inch wide, and very neatly woven together, 21 inches long and 7 broad,—the entrance being at the bottom, and leading up a narrow sort of pipe 9 inches long, and turning down again into a roomy chamber for the reception of the eggs or young. It was suspended from the top of a bamboo. In the forest of Chasmanna I observed a pair of Weaver-birds building, but I did not obtain either.

42. *Foudia madagascariensis* (Linnæus).

“Fody.”

Very common at Fenerive, and also frequently seen on the Hivondrona. The males were beginning to assume their red plumage.

43. *Spermestes nana* (Puch.).

Common, especially where there is or has been cultivation. They generally keep in flocks of from a dozen to fifty.

44. *Mirafra hova*, Hartlaub.

“Borea.”

In the neighbourhood of Foule Point this Lark is tolerably numerous, but not nearly so common as on the great plain near the Mangourou. On the 15th of September I observed one with building-material in its mouth. Iris brown, beak and legs flesh-colour.

[To be continued.]

XXX.—Recent Ornithological Publications.

1. ENGLISH PUBLICATIONS.

SOME of our correspondents, who have expressed in their letters their wishes for a new and authentic catalogue of the European Avifauna, will, we feel sure, be pleased with the acquisition of Prof. Blasius's ‘List of the Birds of Europe’*, lately reprinted

* A List of the Birds of Europe. By Prof. J. H. Blasius. Reprinted from the German, with the author's corrections. Norwich: Matchett and Stevenson. London: Trübner and Co. 1862. Price 1s.